

HB 207 -- CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

SPONSOR: Fitzwater (144)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Corrections and Public Institutions by a vote of 11 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 9 to 1 and 1 present.

Currently, it is a crime to possess, deliver, deposit, or conceal certain items in a prison or jail. This bill adds two-way telecommunications devices and their component parts to the list of prohibited items.

This bill provides that the prohibition on telecommunications devices does not apply to law enforcement officers lawfully engaged in their duties or any person who is authorized to use such a device in the facility.

This bill is similar to HB 1837 (2016).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that, currently, if an inmate is caught with any cell phone components, all the inmate receives is a conduct violation. This bill makes it a felony. One of the issues with inmates possessing cell phones while incarcerated is that they are often able to continue their illegal businesses. Additionally, security in the facility may be compromised when inmates know the schedules of the officers and they are able to report their movements through these smuggled cell phones or their components.

Testifying for the bill was Representative Fitzwater.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.